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UNCLAS OTTAWA 001368

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR WHA/CAN (F. HERNANDEZ) AND AF/W (A. SILSKI)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: MASS PREL MARR EAID LI CA FAC

SUBJECT: CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR LIBERIAN SECURITY REFORM

REF: (A) STATE 061398 (B) OTTAWA 952

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**¶1.** (SBU) In response to ref a, poloff followed up with Andrew Armstrong, Manager of Fleet Policies and Standards at Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) Headquarters. Armstrong stated that he would advise CCG management of our interest in using these boats as part of a nascent Liberian Coast Guard, but also reiterated to poloff his concerns that these boats were neither designed for coastal maritime patrols, nor were they built to operate in a tropical climate. If Canada were to supply these vessels to Liberia, Armstrong indicated that the CCG would likely rely upon Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) to handle negotiations between the USG and the Government of Liberia on the logistics of transferring the boats from Canada to Liberia.

**¶2.** (SBU) In a letter faxed to us on April 14, Louis Hamel, Director of the West and Central Africa Division at FAC, clarified the GoC's position on this issue:

QUOTE: Canada appreciates the role the United States of America is playing in supporting Liberian security reform in accordance with the August 18, 2003 Accra Comprehensive Peace Accord. Canada is also interested in the legal implications of such support in relation to the embargo on arms and related material of all types, decided by the United Nations Security Council in its resolution of 1521 (2003).

Canada's bilateral aid program to Liberia is very limited. Canada is therefore not in a position to offer the Liberian government the Canadian Coast Guard vessels cited in the demarche of March 23, 2005. END QUOTE.

**¶3.** (SBU) Hamel included an addendum to his memo providing specifications for the vessels in question. Relevant text follows:

Begin text.

My office has been in contact with the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) concerning the vessels cited in the demarche of March 23, 2005. The information supplied by Robert Gravelle of the UN Mission in Liberia is substantially correct. The CCG is in the process of disposing or will soon commence disposal of up to nine small vessels in the 11 - 12 metre range.

These vessels in question are, for the most part, in excess of 30 years old and have exceeded their useful life. The vessels vary in speed from 10 to 14 knots with a crew of 4. They have no on-board accommodation and can only operate as day boats. These former search and rescue lifeboats (based on USCG 44 ft MLB design) are not suitable for any pursuit operations since, in general, they have limited fuel capacity, speed and range. The age factor is critical, as the older the vessels the greater the cost of maintenance and at this age that cost can become incremental. Finally the vessels were designed for operation in colder climates and may not be easily operated in tropical climates.

End text.

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